

Section 3

Before You Drive

Study the Montana Driver's Manual.

Go to the Driver Exam Station and take the written knowledge test, have your vision checked and get an Instruction Permit/Learner License.

Practice driving.

Trip Planning

Check the Vehicle

Motor Vehicle Equipment

Clean Glass Surfaces

Adjust Seat and Mirrors

Use Safety Belts and Child Restraints

You the Driver

You must decide if it is safe for you to drive.

DO NOT DRIVE

WHEN VERY TIRED (FATIGUED) - You make bad driving decisions. Stop and rest every two hours.

WHEN VERY SICK - You forget about your driving

WHEN DRINKING ALCOHOL - Your reflexes slow.
Your judgment dulls.



WHEN USING DRUGS and MEDICATIONS - They affect your mood, your vision and your ability to judge space and time.



WHEN ANGRY, UPSET or STRESSED -

Your feelings can keep you from concentrating on driving.

**YOU MUST DECIDE IF IT'S SAFE FOR YOU TO
DRIVE EACH TIME YOU DRIVE**

Plan Ahead – Save Gas

You can save gas and make your car last longer if you do the following:

- Walk or ride a bicycle whenever you can;
- Ride the bus, take a cab or ride a horse;
- Car pool and share rides;
- Avoid driving in heavy traffic – choose a different route or time of day to travel;
- When running errands, make a list before you leave home; and/or
- Call ahead to make sure your destination has what you need or want.

Things To Do Before You Drive

Everyone's safety depends a lot on what you do before you drive. Here are some things to do before you start to drive:

- Check the tires to make sure they have enough air and tread
- Make sure all windows are clear of snow and ice
- Walk around the back of the car and check for a clear path
- Adjust the seat
- Adjust the mirrors
- Buckle your seat belt
- Make sure others in the car are buckled up, too.

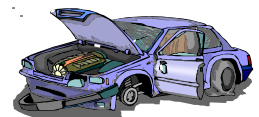


Safe Driving Starts With a Safe Vehicle.

Vehicles with mechanical problems can **CAUSE** a crash.

It costs a lot of money to have your vehicle towed and repaired.

Vehicles must have all **EQUIPMENT** the law requires in good **WORKING** condition.



Check Your Vehicle

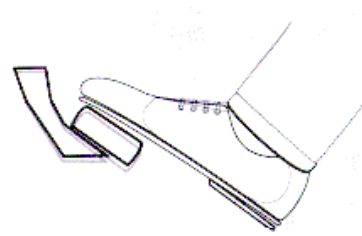
- Brakes
- Tires - Tread, Air Pressure
- Steering
- Lights - Headlights, Brake lights, Tail lights and Turn Signals
- Clean Windshield and Wipers
- Adjust Mirrors
- Seatbelts and Child Restraints
- Exhaust System
- Engine Oil
- Horn
- No loose objects – put backpacks, books and glasses in a safe place



EQUIPMENT

BRAKES

Only brakes can stop your vehicle.



It is very dangerous if brakes are not working. Have a mechanic check the brakes if they make a lot of noise, smell funny or the brake pedal goes to the floor.

STEERING

If the steering is not working properly, it is difficult to control the direction you want to go. If the vehicle is hard to turn or does not turn when the steering wheel is turned, have the steering checked by a mechanic.

TIRES

Too much or too little air pressure in tires can **CAUSE** loss of control when driving.

Worn tire tread can keep you from stopping quickly and from controlling your vehicle properly. Hydroplaning on wet roads can cause a skid. (see page 97)

Check the air pressure in your tires weekly.

You will get better gas mileage with the right amount of air in your tires and your car will handle better too.



VEHICLE LIGHTS

Make sure all lights work

Walk around your vehicle and check all lights.

TURN SIGNALS – show other drivers you plan to turn or change lanes. Turn signals must be visible for 300 feet in sunlight.

BRAKE LIGHTS – show other drivers you are stopping or slowing down. Brake lights are red and must be visible for 300 feet in sunlight.

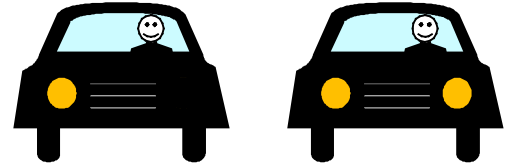
TAILLIGHTS – show other drivers where you are on the road. Taillights are brighter when cars are stopping, slowing or backing up.

TAILLIGHTS must be visible for 500 feet



HEADLIGHTS – show you the road ahead and let other drivers see you. Driving with headlights on at all times is a safe habit to have. You must turn headlights on when you can't see 500 feet ahead.
Keep headlights clean.

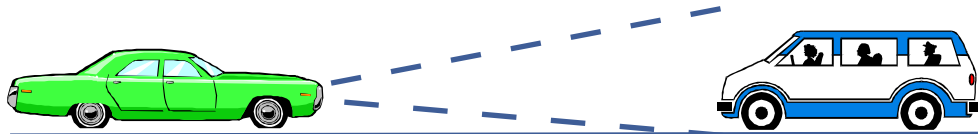
Replace broken headlights immediately



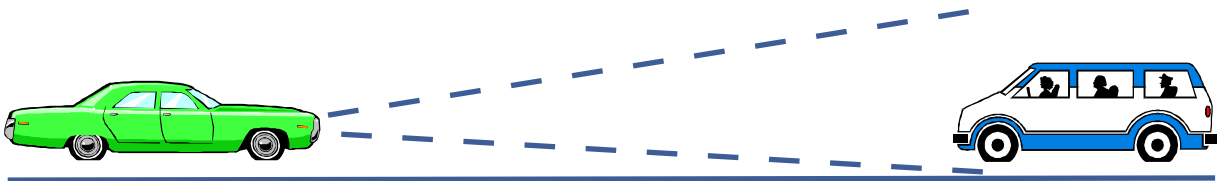
Headlights must be on from a half hour after sunset until a half hour before sunrise



HEADLIGHTS must show persons or vehicles:



on low beam (**DIM**) at 100 feet.



on high beam (**BRIGHT**) at 350 feet.

Turn off high beam headlights when meeting other vehicles 1,000 feet away and when you are 500 feet behind another vehicle. Bright lights make it hard for others to see the road.

Headlights must be on when it is dark and any time you cannot see 500 feet ahead due to blowing dust, fog, rain or snow.

License Plate

A separate **WHITE** light shall illuminate the license plate so it can be seen for 50 feet.

Spotlight

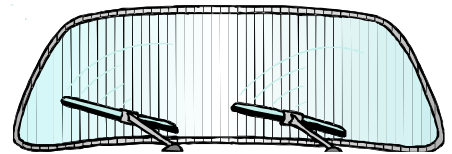
Spotlights must be turned off **WHEN MEETING** or **PASSING** other vehicles at night.

Vehicle Light Distances

1000 feet	Dim high beam headlights when meeting oncoming vehicles
500 feet	Turn off high beam headlights when 500 feet behind other vehicles
500 feet	Turn HEADLIGHTS on if you can't see 500 feet ahead.
500 feet	Tail Lights distance
350 feet	High Beam (Bright) Headlight Distance
300 feet	Brake Light Distance in sunlight
300 feet	Turn Signal Distance in sunlight
100 feet	Low Beam (Dim) Headlight Distance
50 feet	License Plate light

Windshield Wipers

Every vehicle must have **WINDSHIELD WIPERS** in good condition and in good working order.

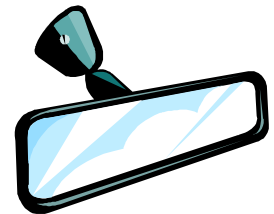


Keep your windshield and headlights clean.

About 90 percent of all driving decisions are based on what is seen. Drivers must see far enough ahead to make good decisions about speed, lane position, traffic signs, signals, markings and hazards.

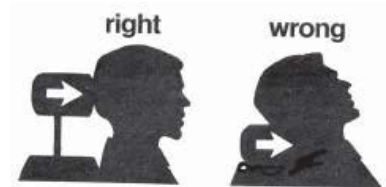
Mirrors

Every vehicle must have a mirror so the driver can see 200 feet to the rear. Adjust the seat and check the mirrors before you drive.



Head Restraints

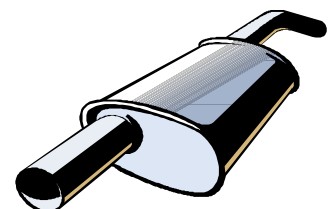
Head restraints offer the best protection when adjusted properly.



Muffler

All vehicles must have a muffler in good condition to prevent excessive noise and smoke. Muffler cutouts, bypasses and similar devices are **NOT** allowed.

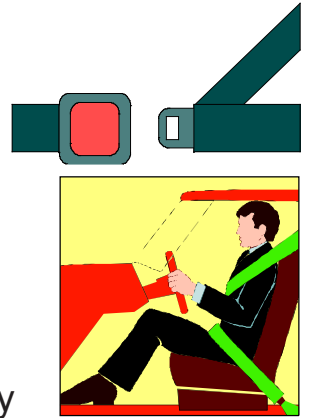
A LEAKY MUFFLER can make you **DROWSY** when driving due to vehicle exhaust entering the vehicle.



SAFETY BELTS AND CHILD RESTRAINTS

Before you drive, always buckle your seat belt.

Montana law requires all people in a car to wear safety belts at all times, even if the car has air bags. Studies have shown that using safety belts greatly reduces your chances of being hurt or killed in a crash.



The safest place for children is buckled in the middle of the back seat.

If children are in the front seat and the airbags go off, kids can be badly hurt or even die.



Babies and children under 6 years of age and who weigh less than 60 pounds must be in a safety seat. Do not hold a child on your lap. Children must be in a safety seat or safety belt at all times.

Loose Objects

Make sure things in the car are put away. If you need to stop quickly, loose things can fly around and hurt someone. Things on the floor could roll under the brake pedal and keep you from being able to stop. If something falls on the car floor, pull over safely to the side of the road and stop before you try to pick it up and put it away.



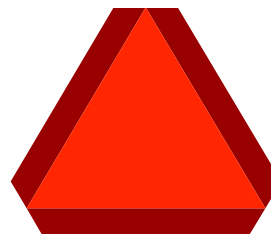
HORN

Every vehicle must have a **HORN** which can be heard for 200 feet. Know where the horn is located so you can find it when you need to warn someone. It could save your life.



SLOW MOVING VEHICLES

This sign must be put on slow machinery and vehicles which go slower than **25 M.P.H.** When slow machines travel on the road, they must have this sign on the rear. It warns drivers to slow down or they may run into the big, slow machine.



LONG LOADS NEED RED FLAGS

If you are hauling a load that goes **FOUR FEET** past the end of your vehicle, you must secure the load with ropes and straps and attach a red flag to the end of the load. The red warning flag must be 12 inches square.



DRIVER RESPONSE TO EMERGENCY VEHICLES

When you see Emergency Vehicles coming or hear sirens, you must move to the far right side of the road and **STOP**.

Emergency vehicles answering a call may go **THROUGH** stop signs and signals. They **MAY** also exceed the speed limit.

When passing an accident or police officer stopped on the side of the road, signal and go into the other lane if it is safe to do so.



FIRE ENGINE

Following

DO NOT follow a fire engine closer than 500 feet if it is answering an alarm.

NEVER drive into or park within the block where fire equipment has stopped.



NEVER drive over a fire hose.

SELF TEST Section 3 - Before you drive

1. Headlights are required at any time you cannot see persons or vehicles for 500 feet (because of snow, dust etc.) and:
 - a. when traffic is very heavy
 - b. during daylight savings time
 - c. from ½ hour before sunset to ½ hour after sunrise
 - d. from ½ hour after sunset to ½ hour before sunrise
2. A leaking exhaust system can:
 - a. cause excessive oil use
 - b. makes your vehicle need a tune-up sooner than normal
 - c. make you drowsy when driving
 - d. set grass fires on country roads
3. Upon hearing a siren of an emergency vehicle, a driver must:
 - a. stop quickly where he is
 - b. stop and wait for a red or green light
 - c. move as far right as possible and stop at the far side of the road
 - d. increase speed and keep out of the way of the emergency vehicle
4. Turn signals must be visible for:
 - a. 100 feet
 - b. 300 feet
 - c. 175 feet
 - d. Only visible at night
5. Vehicle taillights must be seen for 500 feet:
 - a. to let other drivers know you are slowing down
 - b. to help you see when backing up
 - c. to help other drivers see animals on the road
 - d. to let other drivers see you
6. Vehicle horns must be heard 200 feet away to:
 - a. warn other drivers of danger
 - b. tell other cars you are turning
 - c. let cars know you are passing
 - d. tell cars ahead to drive slower

7. When driving with babies and children under 6 years of age and who weigh less than 60 pounds:
- they should sit in the front seat
 - they should sit in the back seat
 - they must be buckled into a child safety seat
 - they should have snacks and toys for long trips
8. Headlights must show persons or vehicles:
- 350 feet on high beam
 - 100 feet on lower beam
 - on the road ahead
 - all of the above
9. On the back of a vehicle a sign with this shape means:
- do not pass any vehicle.
 - this is a slow moving vehicle and it will not be going more than 25 M.P.H.
 - yield to this sign
 - stop and wait
10. The law requires safety belt use:
- for all people in the car
 - when your car has air bags
 - every time you drive
 - all of the above
11. If you are hauling a load which goes past the back of a vehicle by _____ feet, you must attach a red flag on the end of the load.
- 2 feet
 - 3 feet
 - 4 feet
 - 8 feet

